The war on video game censorship continues to wage (Image: Square Enix).

ENTERTAINMENT • 3 MONTHS AGO

ANNA BERNARDO

Aggro Crab and IGDA speak out on game

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An increasing number of developers are sounding the alarm over game censorship, as storefronts like Steam and itch.io have begun pulling not-safe-for-work (NSFW) titles across various categories. The action follows mounting pressure from payment processors.

Among those who have spoken out is NieR: Automata director Yoko Taro, whose year-old warning about payment-based censorship has regained attention following recent game takedowns. Indie studio Aggro Crab, the devs of the summer 2025 Indie hit Peak, and the International Game Developers Association (IGDA), have also joined the chorus of concern.

Yoko Taro linked payment restrictions to wider censorship risks

Yoko Taro raised concerns about payment-based censorship as early as November 2024. A resurfaced post from X (formerly Twitter) dates back to when credit card companies began refusing transactions for legal adult content, resulting in the shutdown of Manga Library Z, a digital archive for rare, out-of-print manga that included significant NSFW material.

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In a machine-translated post, he said it felt like "a different level of danger when payment processors, which are tied to the entire distribution infrastructure, can make such decisions on their own," referring to their refusal to support transactions for NSFW content.

He added: "If payment processors are controlled, it could even be used for speech control in other countries."

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Collective Shout is behind the pressure

Less than a year later, Taro's warnings have coincided with action from payment processors. An open letter from Australian anti-porn group Collective Shout prompted several payment providers to review their support for platforms like Steam and itch.io.

Earlier this year, Collective Shout sent a letter to payment providers condemning platforms that "profit from rape, incest + child abuse" games. While some of the titles listed, such as the rape simulator No Mercy, had already been removed prior to the letter, the group's efforts expanded to include criticism of games like HuniePop and Detroit: Become Human. These titles contain mature themes but are not categorised as adult games by most storefronts.

On itch.io, titles such as 2024 indie hit Mouthwashing, along with other horror games with mature but non-sexual explicit content, have also been delisted because of their themes.

IGDA and developers push back against vague enforcement

The removals drew sharp criticism from across the games industry. On 29 July, the International Game Developers Association (IGDA) released a statement on its website condemning the takedowns of games containing adult content.

"We are alarmed by the vague enforcement of policies delisting and deplatforming legal, consensual, and ethically-developed games, especially from LGBTQ+ and marginalised creators," the IGDA stated.

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Aggro Crab warns that no title is immune

No game is immune: Aggro Crab just added a cannibalism feature in Peak, which can be deemed mature content, and in danger of censorship in the future (Image: Aggro Crab).

Among the developers reacting publicly is indie studio Aggro Crab, creators of the 2024 summer hit Peak. In a thread on X, the team criticised Collective Shout's approach and expressed concern about the broader implications.

"By focusing on the most inflammatory games available, Collective Shout is trying to gain support for a broad ban of content," they wrote. They added that some of their peers had seen their livelihoods jeopardised "after having their games removed due to mature content, sexual or otherwise."

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Aggro Crab stated: "If puritan groups are able to dictate what people worldwide are allowed to spend their money on, it threatens video games' ability to operate as art in any way whatsoever, and it'd be foolish to assume that any game is safe."

The studio also shared a link encouraging others to join efforts to petition payment processors against such forms of censorship.

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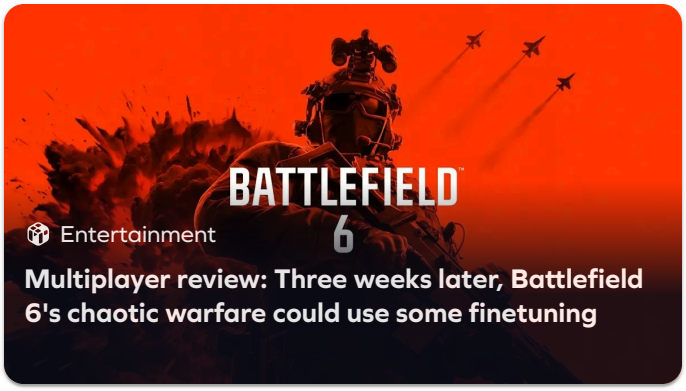

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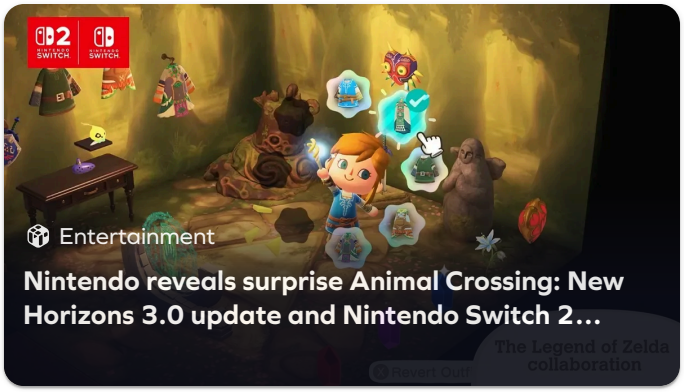

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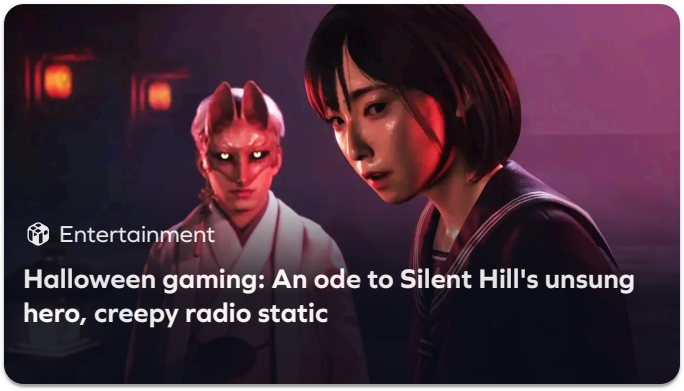

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